

REMARKS

This Amendment is being filed in response to the final Office Action mailed December 15, 2006, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.116. For the following reasons this amendment should be entered, the application allowed, and the case passed to issue. No new matter or considerations are introduced by this amendment. This amendment clearly places the application in condition for allowance. Support for the amendment to claim 44 is found in cancelled claim 36. Amended claim 50 is supported by cancelled claims 36, 40, and 49. Cancelled claim 36 provides support for the amendment to claim 51. Claims 45, 46, 52, 54, 57-59, 61, and 66 are amended to correct informalities. Claims 41 and 53 are amended to correct dependency.

Claims 41, 44-46, and 50-68 are pending in this application. Claims 36-43, 45-49, and 53-68 have been rejected. Claims 44-46 and 50-52 were objected to. Claims 41, 44-46, 50-54, 57-59, 61, and 66 are amended in this response. Claims 1-35 were previously canceled. Claims 36-40, 42, 43, and 47-49 have been canceled in this response.

Interview Summary

Applicants greatly appreciate the courtesy of Examiner Cantelmo in granting a telephone interview with the undersigned on April 16, 2007. During the interview, the undersigned explained that Applicants would file an Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 amending the claims as proposed in the March 15, 2007 after final Amendment, except that claim 49 would be canceled and new claim 69 would not be included. Examiner Cantelmo indicated that the proposed amendment should be allowable.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 44 and 50-52 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Further, in the Advisory Action of April 4,

2007, the Examiner indicated that the above-proposed amendment appeared to place claims 44 and 50-52 in allowable form.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowable subject matter. In accordance with the Examiner's recommendation, claims 44 and 50-52 have been rewritten in independent form. Applicants submit that claims 44 and 50-52 are allowable, along with dependent claims 45, 46, and 53-68, which depend from either claim 44 or 50. Claim 49, which the Examiner contended required further consideration in the Advisory Action, has been canceled. As only claims that the Examiner previously indicated would be allowable remain pending in this application, Applicants submit that this Application is in condition for allowance.

Claim Objections

Claims 45 and 46 are objected to as being of improper dependent form. This objection is traversed, and reconsideration and withdrawal thereof respectfully requested.

Claims 45 and 46 have been amended to address the asserted informality.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 45 and 46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. This rejection is traversed, and reconsideration and withdrawal thereof respectfully requested.

Claims 45 and 46 have been amended to address the asserted informality.

Applicants submit that the claims fully comport with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claim 36 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated over JP 2001-307758 (JP '758). This rejection is traversed, and reconsideration and withdrawal thereof respectfully requested.

Claim 36 has been canceled and, therefore, the rejection is moot.

Claims 36, 37, 39, 40, and 47-49 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated over JP 2001-338670 (JP '670). This rejection is traversed, and reconsideration and withdrawal thereof respectfully requested.

Claims 36, 37, 39, 40, and 47-49 have been canceled and, therefore, the rejection is moot.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 37 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '758. This rejection is traversed, and reconsideration and withdrawal thereof respectfully requested.

Claim 37 has been canceled and, therefore, the rejection is moot.

Claims 37, 38, and 40-43 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miyazawa. This rejection is traversed, and reconsideration and withdrawal thereof respectfully requested.

Claims 37, 38, 40, 42, and 43 has been canceled and, therefore, the rejection is moot.

Claim 41 has been amended to depend from allowable claim 50 and is, therefore, allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 50.

Claims 53-59 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '758 in view of Rieker (U.S. Pat. No. 6,339,749) or Yoshida (U.S. Pat. No. 6,173,226). This rejection is traversed, and reconsideration and withdrawal thereof respectfully requested.

Claims 53-59 depend from allowable claim 50 and are, therefore, allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 50.

Claims 61-65 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '758 in view of Rieker or Yoshida and further in view of Lee (U.S. Pat. No. 6,847,127). This rejection is traversed, and reconsideration and withdrawal thereof respectfully requested.

Claims 61-65 depend from allowable claim 50 and are, therefore, allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 50.

Claim 66 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '758 in view of Rieker or Yoshida and further in view of JP 2000-329576 or Morisawa (U.S. Pat. No. 5,983,154). This rejection is traversed, and reconsideration and withdrawal thereof respectfully requested.

Claim 66 depends from allowable claim 50 and is, therefore, allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 50.

Claims 67 and 68 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '758 in view of Rieker or Yoshida and further in view of Yashiki (U.S. Pat. No. 6,480,928) or Matsuura (U.S. Pat. No. 6,876,892). This rejection is traversed, and reconsideration and withdrawal thereof respectfully requested.

Claims 67 and 68 depend from allowable claim 50 and are, therefore, allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 50.

It is believed that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Applicants therefore respectfully request an early and favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application. If there are any outstanding issues which might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is invited to call Applicants' representative at the telephone number shown below.

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To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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